Volume 23, No. 14, May 13, 2016

Nation

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Survival, dignity and well-being

by Romeo Saganash

Member of Parliament for Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

– Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples sets out minimum standards for the "survival, dignity and well-being" of Indigenous peoples around the world. The United Nations adopted the Declaration after more than two decades of negotiations led by Indigenous peoples from around the world as experts on their own rights. I was invited to go and represent the Grand Council of the Cree, and ultimately, I spent 23 years in those discussions. The Declaration honours the tenacity and knowledge of our ancestors by reaffirming our inherent rights.

The UN Declaration provides guidance to governments, a roadmap for non-Indigenous peoples to better understand the rights of Indigenous peoples, and a powerful tool to advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples. Today, courts in Canada and around the world use the Declaration to interpret law and human rights bodies are using the Declaration to interpret state obligations.

Key provisions of the Declaration – such as the right of Indigenous peoples to refuse unwanted development on their lands – are even being adopted by some investors, corporations and international lending agencies. The time has come to formally adopt this Declaration into legislation and bring Canada in line with international conventions.

Legislation will provide clarity on jurisdiction and process. It will be a catalyst to repeal the Indian Act, formally reject discriminatory doctrines of "discovery" and terra nullius, and will explicitly reject colonialism in favour of a contemporary approach based on justice, equality, respect for human rights and good faith.

I believe that Bill C-262, which I introduced in Parliament on April 21, will ensure that impacts such as intergenerational trauma, severe impoverishment, epidemics of suicide, impairment of mental and physical health, and profound loss of hope will receive the attention they deserve.

I think there is a lot of talk of reconciliation, of a new nation-to-nation relationship in this country. I have heard all the words that have been spoken by the Liberal government. With my bill, I am proposing cooperative, concrete action to back up those words. I think the political and public will exists to propel this bill through the House and into law. So far, besides my own party's support, two Liberal MPs have voiced their support, and I have spoken with members from all parties to work together on the issue of adoption and implementation of the UN Declaration.

I am inspired and compelled by the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The TRC listened to our collective experiences with each individual testimony, and the Calls to Action offer another way we can honour our communities and ancestors. The commissioners have been clear that reconciliation on the part of the government is only possible if the federal government fully adopts and implements the UN Declaration.

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Photo provided by **Benoit Rousseau**

Summer's just around the corner

by Sonny Orr

Oh, what to do this summer?

The goose-hunting season is now going full tilt in every Cree community on both sides of the James and Hudson bays. Every community has emptied out, leaving lonely stragglers to fend for themselves.

In times like these, local businesses often have different schedules posted or announced on-air – that is, if anyone is around at the local radio station. Calling the band offices, local schools and regional organizations are hit-or-miss situations. The shelves in the stores are bare, with large signs that say "Goose Break specials!" in the flour and lard sections. The rare, extremely bored cashier is hard to find and often has to be yelled at because their iPods are on full blast and they can't hear a word you're shouting.

Hopefully this summer will be kind on the skin and heat waves not hot enough to complain about. If only there were a Dairy Queen in every community – that would be perfect. What gets me about a good old DQ sundae is that the amount of ice cream in your average serving is astronomical. The hazards of eating ice cream and driving at the same time are right up there with texting with both hands while driving. Yes, both are downright dangerous! I can't wait for the ice-cream stand to start running around again.

Another great thing about summer is that there are flocks of students eager to take over your job while you're on holiday. However, if you read the fine print on the summer student program, you can't use them to replace you while you are on holiday so that is a no-no. Lately, the first questions asked by summer students are: What's the password for the wi-fi? When is coffee break? Can I go now? When is payday? Sometimes lame excuses come into play, like the common cold, aches-and-pains and the seven-hour stomach bug that usually occurs on Fridays. But hey, when you're young and healthy, your body is able to take all the punishment it can.

For me, my aches-and-pains appear when a good fishing day comes up and my doctor advises me to get more fresh air into my aging system. Fishing is the recreational hobby that surpasses all other summer activities, except for sunbathing on a windy day. Not that I sunbathe a lot, I get enough on my left side as I drive around, but it's those lovely evenings with a setting sun that get my mojo going. Not to mention a rising moon soon afterwards. The television – a major source of heat and boredom killing during the long winter months – is silent as nature takes its place. Just can't wait for summer.

Back to the present – it seems that this is an ordinary spring, with the snow and ice hanging around longer than the past two decades. It may seem to us that climate change has taken a break, but not for those in western Canada, where nary a snowfall or raindrop has been felt for some time now. Forest fires seem to be on Mother Nature's agenda for the west. I'm hoping that for this summer nothing extraordinary will happen so we can get what we wanted all along – a perfect spring and summer.

I, for one, am planning nothing special, except that all goes well with fishing and berry picking. Get a tan everyone!

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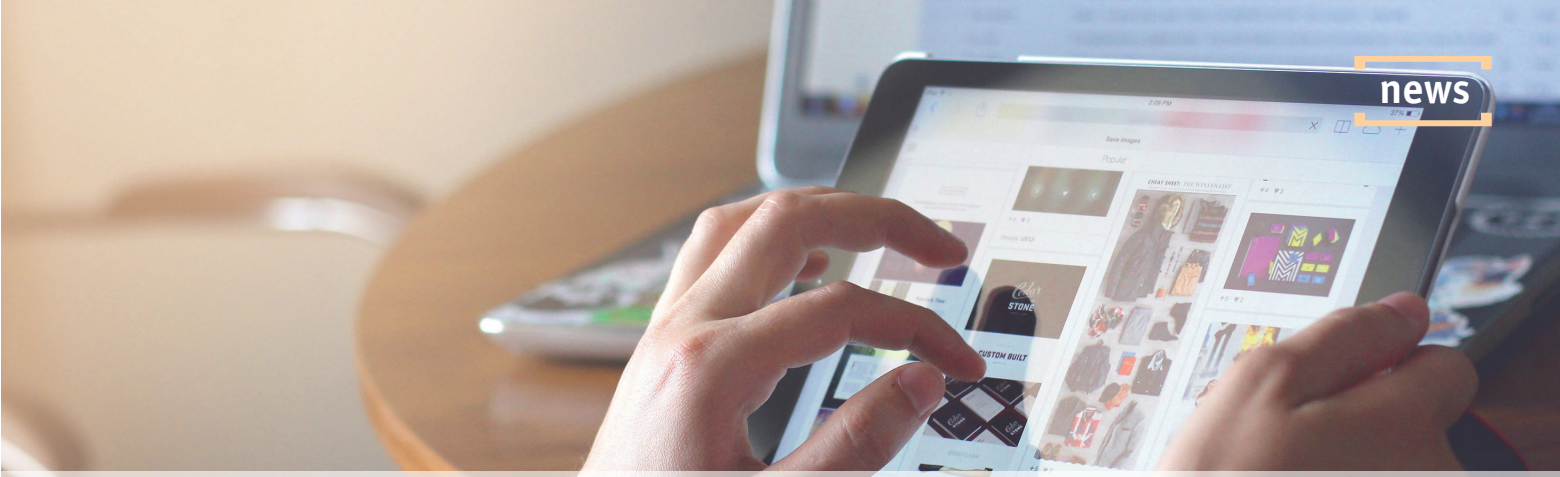

Better access needed

Crees demand quality internet at CRTC hearing

by Orlando Blacksmith

Quality telecommunications services are essential to the success of Aboriginal communities, according to a brief presented by the Cree Nation Government and the Eeyou Communications Network to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

Representing a broad range of groups in Eeyou Istchee, they insisted large telecoms provide the same quality of telecommunication services to rural towns and communities in the north as they would to bigger centres in the south. One way to guarantee the service would be to make broadband a universal service.

François Turgeon, the director of IT at the Cree School Board and a board member of the ECN, said the CRTC should enforce broadband technology as a basic service for all homes in Eeyou Istchee. "Please consider this," Turgeon said, "Eeyou Istchee is situated far from higher learning centres, colleges and universities. Now that the schools with ECN service have made the internet an integral part of the learning experience, what happens when students go home?"

Turgeon says that a solution would be to make quality internet service universal and affordable to everyone in the northern communities. There is no equivalent service for students to access homework through internet or to complete their assignments electronically.

"Online tutoring is also not available either because there is no internet access offered in our communities," he added. "Web portal services to parents and students to follow and monitor the progress of the children is also difficult to implement when internet is, again, not available."

Ted Moses, former Grand Chief of the Crees and the initiator of a fibre-optic project in James Bay, said that making broadband a universal service would address these disparities.

"It will help eliminate the education deficit," Moses said. "It will encourage Canadian innovation. It will advance literacy, travel and enterprise. It will ensure that all Canadians north and south have a greater opportunity to be part of social governance."

"We don't see telecommunications as disconnected from everything else," said Hyman Glustein, a telecommunications advisor for the Cree Nation Government. "We see it as a part of the whole of society. So when we do an improvement in telecommunications, it improves police services, it improves justice services. There are local courthouses in all the communities now. These things were never possible before."

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Discrimination by large telecommunications companies against remote northern communities happens when they offer a lower quality of service for the same price others pay to receive high speed internet.

"I have worked in the Cree Board of Health and Social Services for most of my adult life and I know how important the internet is in the delivery of these services," said Bella Moses Petawabano, chairperson of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. "My community deserves to be more than a line entry on the phone economy books. It is the social fabric of our lives. If our young people have to leave in order to lead their lives, if they cannot conduct what today are considered basic skills to work, it is our loss."

Petawabano noted that if the CRTC were to make internet a basic service for Cree consumers, the local economy would benefit. "Since the internet there is limited by unreliable speed and dropped connections my children and grandchildren, some of whom are in schools and universities in Montreal and Gatineau, often find these prolonged visits interfere with their studies and their friendships. Like all young people, they need access to modern internet telecommunications," she said.

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Reconnecting

Goose Break allows Cree hunters to remember the past

by Orlando Blacksmith

The long, cold winter months are coming to an end. Communities across Eeyou Istchee look like ghost towns during this important time we reverently call Goose Break, when our people live off the land traditionally, like we used to. To mark the occasion, *the Nation* spoke to two of the 10 Cree hunters who are the first from their respective communities to kill a goose this season.

The first goose champs are Harry Rupert (Chisasibi), Julian Edward Gilpin (Eastmain), Silas Blackned (Nemaska), Calvin Kakabat (Wemindji), Brad Wylde (Washaw Sibi), Marcel Gull (Waswanipi), Randolf Gunner (Mistissini), Bobby Capassisit (Oujé-Bougoumou), Burton Snowboy (Whapmagoostui) and Jack Katapatuk Jr. (Waskaganish).

Where non-Crees might see the Goose Break season as a type of vacation, it is, in fact, a traditional activity that brings family and friends together in a cultural movement. It's a time to teach your children, nieces, nephews, cousins and siblings about our Cree way of life. It's a great time to meet new people and experience new things. And, of course, the geese are delicious. Goose Break is simply a gift to our communities that keeps on giving.

"I love the excitement you get when you hear the geese from afar and when you see them as they approach," said Silas Blackned, a 29-year-old hunter from Nemaska. "It's important to keep our tradition alive."

Blackned killed his first goose of 2016 when he was going home for his lunch break. There were two geese on the open water at the Narrows. He snuck up on them against the wind. He was crawling in the snow getting wet and cold because he wasn't wearing his hunting gear. He ended up killing one, but the other one was too far.

"It felt really good after I shot it down," he said. "Grandma had the first choice of what pieces she wanted for supper and then I shared the rest with family, friends and colleagues. It was so good with red wine."

His memories of his first goose will stay with him forever. "When I was ten years old my grandpa took me for a boat ride on the Rupert River and we saw a lot of geese in a bay and we snuck up on them against the wind," Blackned recounted. "He let me use his 12-gauge and we killed about eight to ten geese. I will never forget that moment, when I killed my first goose ever. My shoulders were so bruised the day after."

Julian Edward Gilpin, a 31-year-old hunter from Eastmain, says he loves goose hunting because of his late grandfather. "I like the beautiful landscape, waiting patiently for the geese and ducks to fly in our direction," Gilpin explained. "Goose Break is important to the community, especially for the youth and the Elders.

"All I have now are memories," he added. "The last time I was on a Goose Break hunt was ten years ago. My aunts and uncles and I haven't gone to our first camp for ten years now since an accident happened to our family in 2004. My late grandparents died in an accident and since then none of us have gone back to our camp. Even this year no one is going to there."

Gilpin said that he tries to remain positive, because the memories he has of his camp and his grandparents are good ones that he will cherish for the rest of his life. Now that he has his own skidoo, he might make the trip to the camp and build a cabin for him and his family.

"The community made people burn the cabin down because it was getting too mouldy," he explained. "We have no cabin at our camp. I'm sitting here having tears as I remember this little story."

A few photos of this year's catch

Chisasibi party ends in tragedy

by Jonathan Matthews-Neeposh

A morning fire in a Chisasibi home April 27 claimed the life of 40-year-old Samuel Kawapit, who was originally from Whapmagoostui.

According to one of the residents of the home on Chimo Road, Kawapit was passed out after a night of partying when the fire occurred. Joshua Shauk said in a telephone interview that there were five males, including himself and the deceased, and two females in the house that night.

CBC North reported that 10 firefighters arrived at the burning house shortly after 8 am. Due to the cold, they were unable to use local fire hydrants to douse the flames and were instead forced to use water delivered by trucks. One person was found dead in the building while others were taken to the Chisasibi hospital to be treated for smoke inhalation.

After the death was deemed suspicious by local authorities, Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EEPF) transferred the investigation to the Sûreté du Québec (SQ). Members of the SQ from Montreal arrived on the scene the next day to begin their investigation.

EEPF Police Director Reggie Bobbish told CBC that a homicide unit was brought in to help investigate. While it has been reported that a suspect has been brought in for questioning, no name or additional information can be made public.

Friends of Samuel Kawapit say he was a kind and gentle person who had a good sense of humour and liked to joke with everyone. He had a passion for hunting and loved his family. Kawapit and his wife of 10 years, Irene Napash, had moved to Chisasibi from Whapmagoostui with their adopted daughter just over a year ago. Kawapit is also survived by another daughter from a previous relationship.

At press time, no date has been announced for the funeral as Kawapit's remains were sent to the Montreal Coroner's service for an autopsy.

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Crash on Broadback River claims life

A Cessna aircraft heading to a hunting camp near Waswanipi crashed near the shore of the Broadback River April 30 while attempting to land on a stretch of thin ice. Two of the plane's occupants, Mario Delcourt and Jean Paradis, were able to make it to safety but a third passenger, Steve Paradis, was carried away by the current. Sûreté du Québec divers recovered his body May 3 at the bottom of the river near the site of the crash.

SQ Sergeant Daniel Thibodeau told media that the pilot's family were worried when they were unable to contact him the evening of the crash and asked another pilot to fly over the landing site. Noticing the two men on the shore but unable to land, the pilot managed to drop a satellite phone, which the crash victims used to call for help. A rescue helicopter was dispatched from Matagami and the two men were brought to the hospital to be treated for hypothermia.

"It is with great sadness that I learned about the death of Mr. Steve Paradis," Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come said in a statement. "On behalf of the members of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government and myself, I offer our sincere condolences to all the family and friends of Mr. Paradis, and especially to his spouse and two children."

Air Creebec transfers planes to Val-d'Or

Air Creebec announced May 2 that it will permanently move three of its Dash 8-100 airplanes to the Val-d'Or airport, a move that will generate more jobs in the region. Air Creebec has 20 planes registered with Transport Canada and employs over 350 people in its operations at 20 different destinations in Quebec and Ontario.

"The move was planned earlier this winter," said Chief Operating Officer Tanya Pash. "We saw an increase in our charter services in the region." Pash says the employment opportunities this shift will create are in maintenance and operational support for the Air Creebec fleet.

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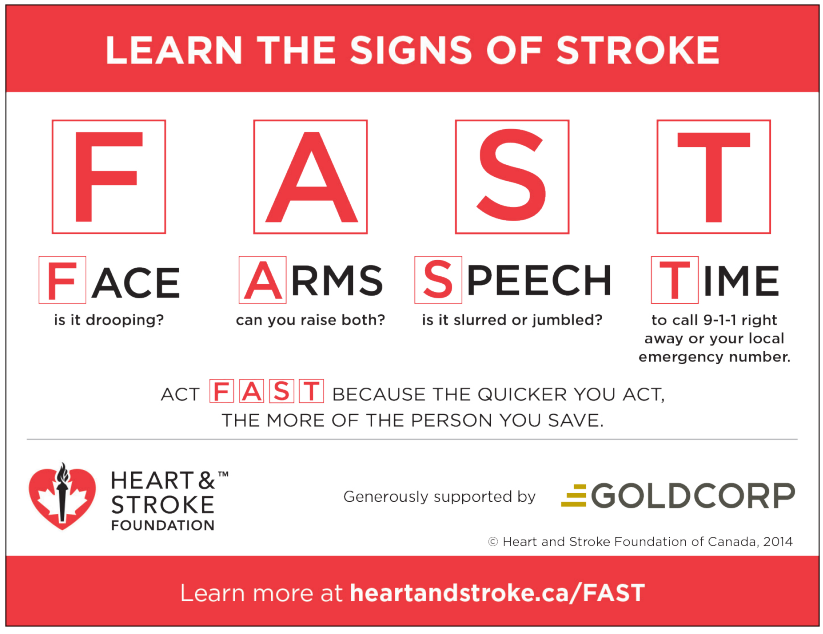
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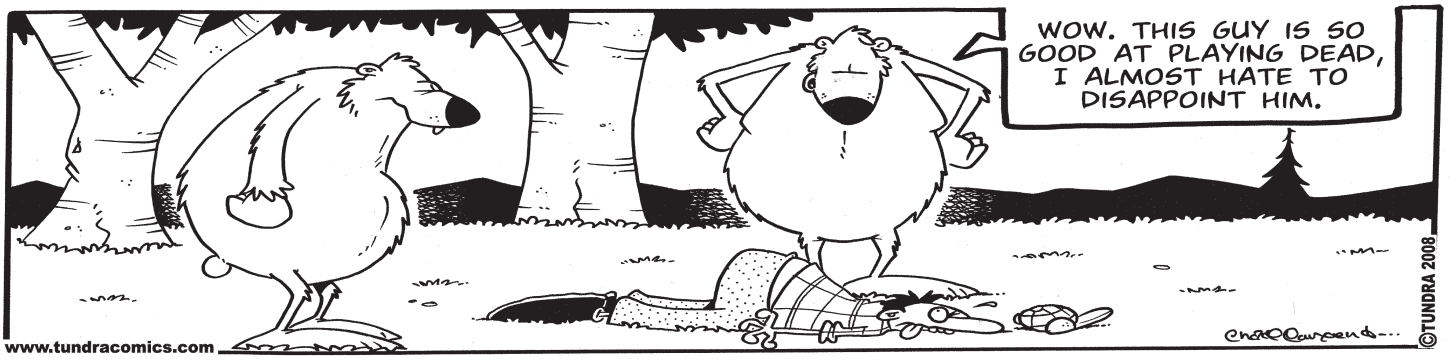


The Nation's annual tourism guide

by Joshua Grant

Sunshine & Free Time

In Montreal

Late May

Museums Day

By the end of May, spring has definitively sprung in Montreal and the warm weather and excitement around summer activities makes it a great time to tour the city on foot to take in different sights and attractions before peak tourist season.

One interesting opportunity for art and history lovers is Montreal Museums Day, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year on Sunday, May 29. Museums Day offers free admission to every museum across the city and gives visitors the option of planning out their schedule or following a prepared itinerary with transportation included.

This year's programming at the 41 museum locations can be found online at museesmontreal.org/en. Some suggestions: the Biosphere Environment Museum, the Canadian Guild of Craft (which features a number of First Nations artefacts and an Inuit art collection), and, for a family-oriented outing, the Montreal Science Centre.

www.museesmontreal.org/en/museums-day

Go Bike MTL

From May 29 to June 5 the Go Bike Festival in Montreal proposes a number of cycling-related activities around the greater Montreal area. Go Bike MTL caters to both recreational and serious cyclists with bike tours all across the island ranging from 25 to 150 kms. Programming includes the Bike to Work initiative May 30 to June 3, the Metropolitan Challenge on May 29, and the Tour la Nuit (night tour) on Friday, June 3. Go Bike MTL's main event, the Tour de l'Île de Montréal (tour of the island), takes place Sunday, June 5.

www.velo.qc.ca/en/govelo/Go-bike-Montreal-festival

June

Fringe Festival

Montreal's St. Ambroise Fringe Festival hosts a wide array of live entertainment, including theatre, dance, music, drag shows and comedy. Artists and performers are selected solely by lottery and the artistic work presented is entirely uncensored as

Summer is all about fun in the sun with family and friends. As Goose Break marks the change of seasons and families enjoy their harvest, it's just about time to start planning this year's summer activities, vacations and family get-aways.

Whether you're looking for music festivals, history lessons, leisure outings, outdoor adventures or arts and culture activities, we've highlighted a diverse selection of events and programming taking place around Montreal and all of Quebec this summer 2016.

Street performers at the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal

Photo by Benoit Rousseau

the focus of Fringe Fest is complete accessibility and freedom of expression for both artists and audiences alike.

A staple of Montreal's early summer entertainment, Fringe has a grassroots feel and brings acts and artists from all over the world for alternative theatre and performances that stray from convention. Events take place at a variety of makeshift and conventional theatres as well as at a main outdoor venue on Boulevard St-Laurent, allowing the audience to connect directly to the artists on stage. Featuring hundreds of shows and performances, all at low prices, Fringe 2016 takes place June 1-21.

www.montrealfringe.ca

Montreal Grand Prix

If you enjoy the glamour and luxury synonymous with the F1 racing scene, there is no better event to get your party on than at Montreal's Grand Prix, the only F1 race in North America. Grand Prix festivities run June 10-12, culminating in the main event at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve on the last day.

F1 takes over Île Jean-Drapeau and the downtown core for the weekend with locals and tourists showing off their tricked-out cars and flocking to pubs, restaurants and a blocked-off Crescent Street for concerts, demos, celebrity appearances, car displays and more.

www.grandprixmontreal.com

Beer Fest

Montreal's Mondial de la bière is an international beer-tasting festival at the Palais de congrès. This year's edition runs June 8-12 and gives visitors the chance to taste craft brews and artisanal alcohol from all over the world. Admission is free, but drink tickets are a dollar apiece with samples requiring 2-to-8 tickets depending on the quality and size of drink offered by each exhibitor.

Beer Fest is a great chance to try out some of Quebec's lesser-known craft beers as well as some rare imports. The festival also offers workshops on how to brew your own. Whether you are looking to sample new products, discover new drink pairings for dinner parties or enjoy quality beer and amazing food on an outdoor terrasse, the Mondial de la bière has a little bit of everything for the 18+ crowd.

www.festivalmondialbiere.qc.ca

MURAL Festival

A relatively new event that celebrates street art, the Montreal MURAL Festival kicks off June 9 with a block party on Boulevard St-Laurent, featuring food, drink and outdoor music, and continues through June 19. Some of Montreal's best graffiti artists are given permission to use the sides of massive downtown buildings as their canvas and decorate the urban landscape with fun and thought-provoking art. Featuring 50+ murals, this festival is the perfect opportunity to see urban artists in action and mingle with some of the city's creative souls.

www.muralfestival.com

Folk Fest

Montreal's Festival sur le canal continues to grow every year and boasts an excellent lineup of singer/songwriters, blues, country, bluegrass and other folk styles in various indoor venues plus three days of free music on the Lachine Canal headlined by Whitehorse, Joel Plaskett and Socalled with Yves Lambert. Located on the Esplanade du Centenaire, the Folk Fest is a family-friendly event in a laid-back, inviting atmosphere that promotes local artists, folk legends and young talent on three separate stages. It also offers face painting, bouncy castles for kids and an evening of camping sponsored by Parks Canada.

www.montrealfolkfest.com

National Aboriginal Day

Organized by the people behind the Montreal First Peoples Festival, National Aboriginal Day is marked

Above: Children's entertainment at the Montréal Folk Festival

FrancoFolies

The world's biggest French-language music festival, Les FrancoFolies take the stage at downtown venues and Montreal's Quartier des Spectacles June 9-18. Offering up a mix of franco pop, rock, folk, hip hop, jazz, world music, and performance art, Francofolies 2016's lineup includes the likes of Jean Leloup, Charles Antoine Gosselin, Eric Lapointe, Les Trois Accords, Marie Mai, Koriass, Manu Militari and many up-and-coming artists. For more information or to buy tickets visit www.francofolies.com/.

in Montreal with a special ceremony starting at 12 p.m. at Place d'Armes in celebration of the solstice on June 21.

A special event that features Native drummers, traditional dancing, singing, art and ceremonial regalia from different First Nations in Quebec, this is the perfect opportunity for Natives, Montrealers and tourists alike to celebrate Native culture.

www.nativelynx.qc.ca

Jazzfest

The Montreal International Jazz Festival's star-studded musical line-up draws hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world. While there are a number of paid, indoor shows, the Jazz Fest also offers many free concerts on five outdoor stages with established musicians in a variety of genres not limited to jazz. Blues, funk, soul, hip hop, pop and world music are all on the menu and each year the festival highlights several popular artists in major free concerts, typically at the opening, midway and closing points of the festivities.

Jazz Fest 2016 runs June 29 to July 9. While the full outdoor program has not yet been released, the roster for this year's indoor concerts includes George Thorogood and the Destroyers, Kool & the Gang, Rufus Wainwright performing with a full orchestra, the Sugarhill Gang with Grandmaster Flash, Melle Mel and Scorpio, Lauryn Hill, Radio Radio, Peter Bjorn and John, and Cat Power solo.

www.montrealjazzfest.com

July

International fireworks competition

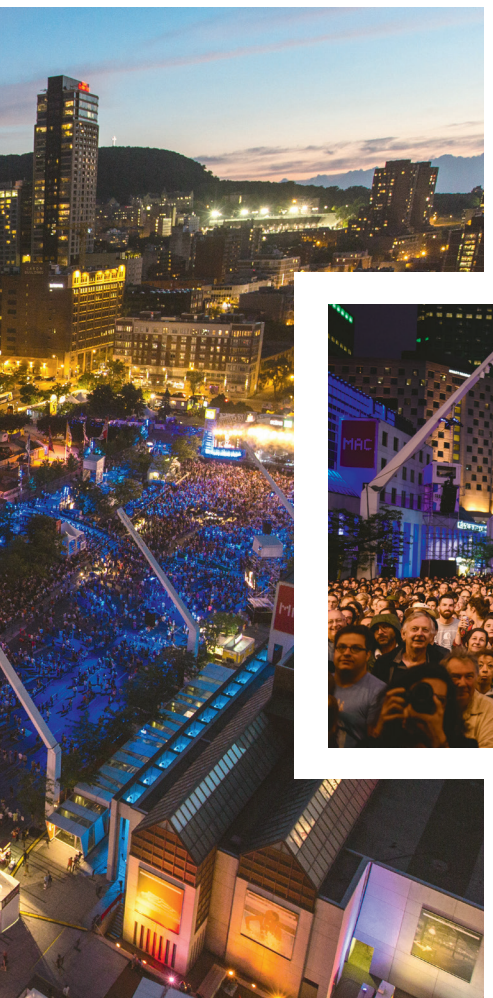
If you're looking for a spectacular evening activity in Montreal, the Montreal International Fireworks Competition is an affordable and exciting display that can be enjoyed by the entire family (just make sure you bring some earplugs for your little ones).

Running July 2-30 every Wednesday and Saturday night, this Montreal tradition showcases the world's best pyrotechnics as countries from across the globe compete for international fireworks glory. This year's contests features Chile, Canada, Switzerland, the Unites States, Spain and Sweden, plus opening and closing extravaganzas that you can catch for free from the Old Port or anywhere on or near the Jacques Cartier Bridge. But you can also purchase tickets and watch from La Ronde.

www.sixflags.com/larondeen/linternational-des-feux/program

Comiccon

The Montreal Comiccon comes to life July 8-10 at Palais des congrès and gives comic book, sci-fi, cosplay, gaming, anime, horror and movie fans the chance to show off their cosplay colours, test out new video games, buy new bling and meet some of their biggest heroes.



Right: Manu Militari will be performing at FrancoFolies

This year's guest of honour is none other than William Shatner. Other stars include Alfonso Ribeiro, Billy Dee Williams, Dave Ross, Kate Mulgrew, Liam McIntyre, Neal Adams, Yaya Han and Scott Hall with more announcements still to come.

www.montrealcomiccon.com

Percussion Festival

The 15th annual Festival International de Percussions brings together rhythmic traditions from all over the world and while percussion is the focus, music, dance, photography, visual arts, exhibitions and drum workshops are all a part of the show. This year the festival takes place in Verdun July 2-10 and promises a unique blend of culture and international grooves.

www.percussions.ca

Carifiesta

Montreal's Carifiesta is back for its 41st edition, bringing the colourful traditions of Caribbean culture to Montreal's streets in sizzling fashion.

Starting at noon on Saturday, July 2 a moving carnival of songs, beats, traditional dances, spirit and amazing costumes will take to rue Sainte Catherine marching from rue du Fort to Philips Square. While Carifiesta is a fun and vibrant party, its bigger goal is to celebrate emancipation and freedom, taking back Caribbean culture and sharing it with the people of Montreal.

www.carifiesta.com

Just for Laughs

Just for Laughs 2016 will take over Montreal July 13-31 with street events, gala evenings and comedy shows featuring some ofthe world's funniest performers. While much of the line-up has yet to be announced, Just for Laughs never disappoints (last year's acts included Mike Myers, Dave Chappelle, Trevor Noah and Neil Patrick Harris). Confirmed for this year: Rachid Badouri hosting the Ethnic Show, Mike Ward as host of the Nasty Show, Canuck comic Howie Mandel, France's Gad Elmaleh and Jimmy Carr from the UK.

www.hahaha.com/en

Fantasia

One of the best ways to beat the summer heat is to hit the cinema. The Fantasia International Film Festival offers a culturally diverse collection of movies curated to emphasize unrecognized talent, independent filmmaking, genre experimentation and quality films made outside the glamour and glitz of Hollywood production.

Fantasia is also known for reviving and restoring old cult classics. A competitive film festival and a fan celebration alike, this event has something for everyone, presenting films across all genres in smaller theatres around downtown Montreal.

www.fantasiafestival.com

Highland Games

If you're looking to get in touch with your Scottish roots or simply take in some Celtic culture, Montreal's Highland Games are in Parc Arthur-Therrien in Verdun on July 31.

Osheaga

Osheaga Arts and Music Festival celebrated its 10th anniversary last year and has become a major player in the North American music festival circuit. Osheaga takes over Île Jean-Drapeau the weekend of July 29-31 with a carefully selected line-up featuring renowned and budding artists across all musical genres performing on five different stages.

This year's roster features the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Radiohead, Cypress Hill, Future, Mac Miller, the Lumineers, the Cat Empire, the Damn Truth and the Barr Brothers with more artist announcements to come.

www.osheaga.com

Photo by velkr0 CC BY 2.0

Featuring bagpipe and highland dancing competitions plus Celtic sporting events like caber tossing, sheaf toss, putting the stone and the hammer toss, this family-friendly event also offers plenty of traditional wares and ales to sample and sip. The games also have bouncy castles, face painting and other activities for children.

www.montrealhighlandgames.qc.ca.

August

Présence Autochtone

Présence Autochtone

Présence Autochtone, also known as Montreal's First People's festival, is a multidisciplinary event that showcases Indigenous creativity through film, video, dance, concerts, art shows and other traditional activities.

The festival takes over downtown to celebrate local and foreign Indigenous culture and give visitors the chance to learn about Native art, lifestyle and values. This year's full lineup has yet to be released but the annual film and video competition and the live entertainment stage will run August 3-10 in Montreal's Quartier des Spectacles near Place des Arts.

www.presenceautochtone.ca/en

Heavy Montreal

Heavy metal fans have the chance to rock out in Montreal and Parc Jean-Drapeau late this summer, with Heavy Montreal shifting to one day of shows in the city (August 5) and two days on Île Jean-Drapeau (August 6-7). The festival presents a range of hard rock, metal, punk and other hardcore sounds with notable artists this year including Five Finger Death Punch, Volbeat, Disturbed, Mastodon, Killswitch Engage, Zakk Wylde and Black Label Society.

An ideal environment for metal-heads to let loose free of judgement, Heavy Montreal also has plenty of side attractions like the annual Heavy Mania Wrestling tournament.

www.heavymontreal.com

Reggae fest

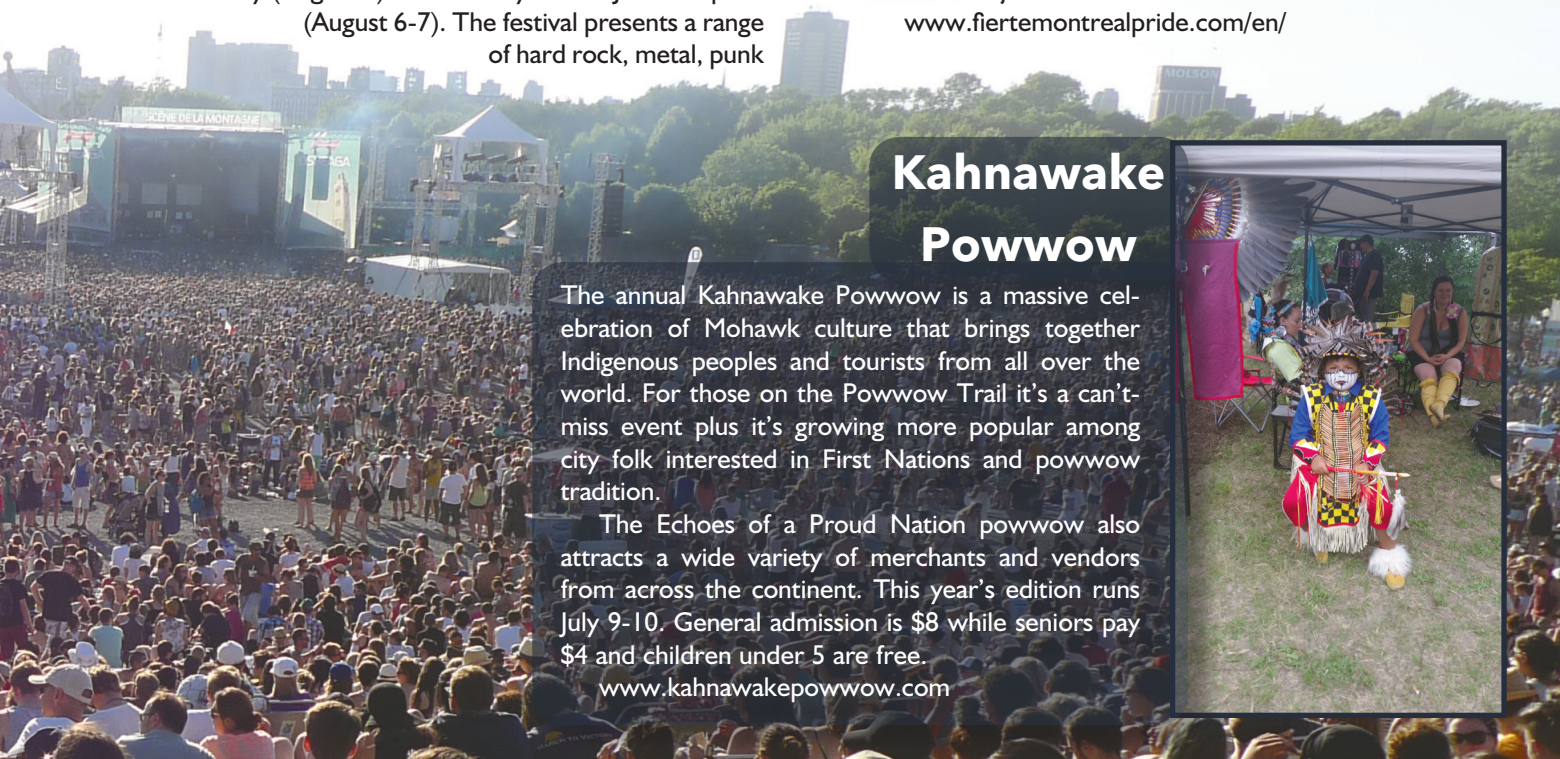
Reggae lovers won't want to miss the Montreal International Reggae Festival this August 26-28 in the Old Port. Three days of dancehall, dub, lover's rock and roots reggae featuring recognized artists who blend its different genres, Reggae Fest also features sister genres like calypso and R&B. Curated to celebrate Caribbean music, heritage and the cultural diversity of Montreal, the Reggae festival offers a more laid-back, dance-oriented alternative to some of the region's bigger musical events.

www.montrealinternationalreggaefestival.com

Pride

Montreal's Gay Pride festival is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, hosting community events, cultural activities and other festivities August 8-14 leading up to one of the biggest parades of the year. Pride Week recognizes all members of LBGT community by promoting their history, culture and art. A drag show at Place Émilie-Gamelin, a community day in the Gay Village and the Pride Parade through downtown under the theme "Our Flag, Our Nature" are the week's major events.

www.fiertemontrealpride.com/en/



Kahnawake Powwow

The annual Kahnawake Powwow is a massive celebration of Mohawk culture that brings together Indigenous peoples and tourists from all over the world. For those on the Powwow Trail it's a can't-miss event plus it's growing more popular among city folk interested in First Nations and powwow tradition.

The Echoes of a Proud Nation powwow also attracts a wide variety of merchants and vendors from across the continent. This year's edition runs July 9-10. General admission is $8 while seniors pay $4 and children under 5 are free.

www.kahnawakepowwow.com

Outside Montreal

May

Gatineau Beer Festival and Festibière Rouyn-Noranda

The theme of Gatineau's Beer Festival is "drink less, drink better" and it's a great place to sip from a vast selection of craft beers (over 300 varieties) carefully put together by the 30-plus breweries featured at the event. This year's edition runs May 26-28 at the Canadian Museum of History with indoor and outdoor venues as well as musical performances by Claude Bégin, Galaxie and Classified

May 26, 27 and 28, respectively. Food, live entertainment and tons of beer are on tap. www.festibiere.ca/en/summer

For a similar event that's closer to home, the Gatineau Beer Fest organizers also host Festibière in Rouyn-Noranda with this year's festival happening June 9-11 at Presqu'île du Lac Osiko.

June

DansEncore

A dance event held right in the heart of downtown Trois-Rivières, DansEncore brings international dance acts to Quebec in an explosion of colour and movement. Featuring galas, contemporary shows, parties, competitions and master classes for dancers plus free outdoor entertainment and fun, DansEncore is in its 22nd edition and will go down June 2-5.

www.dansencore.ca

Saint-Honoré International Kite festival

A festival that is every bit as beautiful as it is fun for the whole family, the Saint-Honoré dans l'Vent kite festival flies June 17-19 through the skies of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean.

Bringing in professional kite fliers from all over the planet to the Saint-Honoré airport, the festival has activities for all ages including inflatables, bubble soccer, mascots, airplane tours, live music, DJs, meals, refreshments and, of course, kite demonstrations of all shapes and sizes.

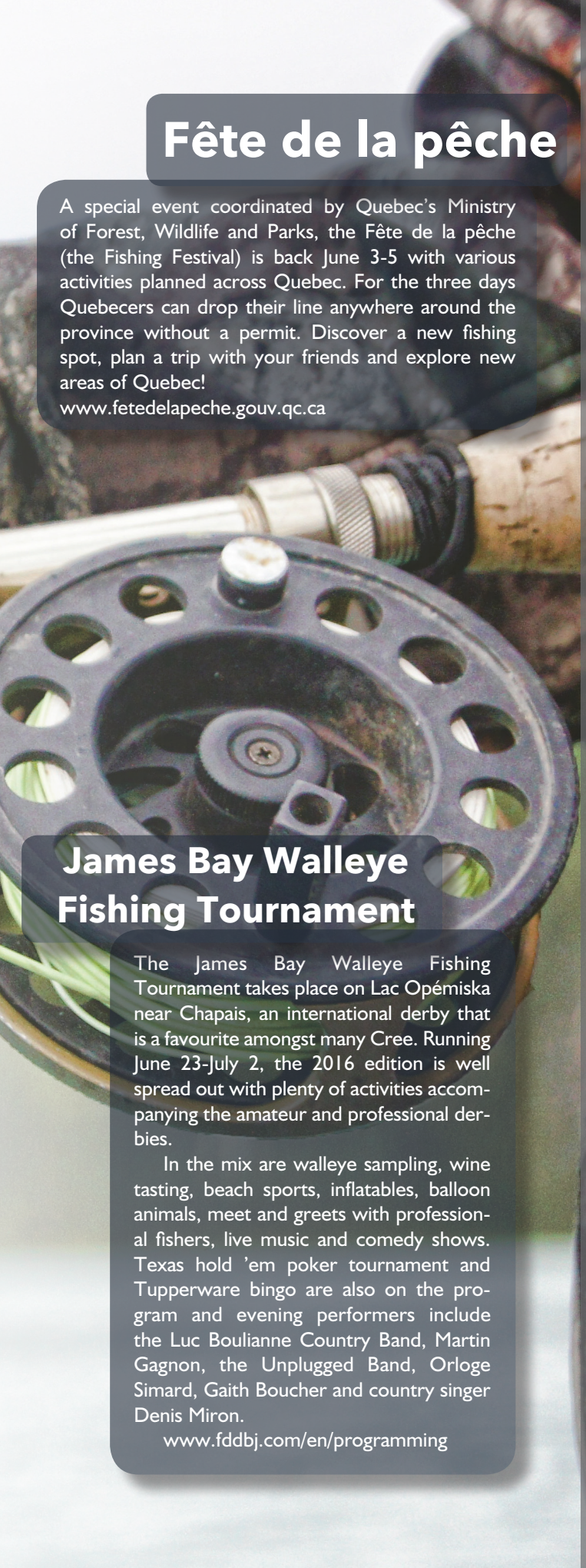
A three-day event, Saint Honoré's kite fest caters to families and offers the option of setting up a trailer for the weekend.

www.sthonoredanslvent.com

Painting and Sculpture symposium

Whether you are an artist or simply a fan of the fine arts, the Symposium international de peinture et sculpture du Saguenay–Lac-St-Jean gives you the opportunity to create and enjoy the crafts of painting and sculpting. The 2016 edition takes place June 15-19 and will bring together local, Canadian and international artists.

www.symposiumsaguenay.com



Fête de la pêche

A special event coordinated by Quebec's Ministry of Forest, Wildlife and Parks, the Fête de la pêche (the Fishing Festival) is back June 3-5 with various activities planned across Quebec. For the three days Quebecers can drop their line anywhere around the province without a permit. Discover a new fishing spot, plan a trip with your friends and explore new areas of Quebec!
www.fetedelapeche.gouv.qc.ca

James Bay Walleye Fishing Tournament

The James Bay Walleye Fishing Tournament takes place on Lac Opémiska near Chapais, an international derby that is a favourite amongst many Cree. Running June 23-July 2, the 2016 edition is well spread out with plenty of activities accompanying the amateur and professional derbies.

In the mix are walleye sampling, wine tasting, beach sports, inflatables, balloon animals, meet and greets with professional fishers, live music and comedy shows. Texas hold 'em poker tournament and Tupperware bingo are also on the program and evening performers include the Luc Boulianne Country Band, Martin Gagnon, the Unplugged Band, Orloge Simard, Gaith Boucher and country singer Denis Miron.

www.fddbj.com/en/programming

Amnesia Rockfest

Touted as the biggest rock festival in North America, Amnesia Rockfest is back in Montebello, Quebec for its 11th edition June 23-26. Blink 182, Rise Against, Jane's Addiction, Ice Cube, Billy Talent, Lamb of God, Sum 41, Twisted Sister (their last-ever Canadian show) and NOFX (performing their album Punk in Drublic) are among this year's headliners. Rockfest also bashes the funny bone with a comedy card that includes Alex Roof, Bob Bissonnette, Mike Ward and midget wrestling.

www.amnesiarockfest.com/en/

Cheese and Tradition

If you love wine and cheese, you won't want to miss the newly re-branded festival Fromages, Bouffe & Traditions de Victoriaville this June 17-19 at Parc de la vélogare. While their new website is still under construction, the full program is expected to be released soon and it seems the festival plans on expanding from its focus on showcasing local and provincial dairy products to incorporate local heritage and cuisine. The event also features entertainment for kids and workshops on cheese-pairing.

www.fromagesbouffetraditions.ca

Beauce Carnival

The Beauce Carnival will be back at the Chibougamau arena June 23-26, a chance to get your young ones out for some fun as they celebrate the end of the school year and the beginning of summer.

The carnival promises crazy carnival rides with tamer options for younger kids as well as a midway arcade and a variety of game booths.

www.beaucecarnaval.com

Senneterre forestry festival

For all things forestry, the Festival forestier de Senneterre is back in action June 24-26. This year the festival teams up with RDS to present a strong man competition on the first day, along with the standard amateur and professional lumberjack and team forestry challenges.

A family event, Senneterre's festival also provides children's animation like face painting and bouncy castles along with evening concerts from Pagliaro, Les B.B. and Vilain Pingouin and a fireworks show on Friday evening.

www.festivalforestier.ca.

Festival de la truite mouchetée

The Festival de la truite mouchetée is a competitive trout fisher's dream, returning to the beautiful Saint-Alexis-des-

Rachid Badouri

Monts in the Mauricie June 18-26. Fishers from across Quebec and beyond gather to compete for close to $150,000 in prizes.

Activities include a Saint-Jean Baptiste celebration with le groupe Jériboire, line dancing, a mud drag, super bingo, deck hockey tournaments, art expositions, a 13-and-under soap box car race, a musical fireworks show and performances by DJ Andton, YOAN and Christian Marc Gendron with a tribute to the Piano Man.

www.festivaldelatruitemouchetee.com/

FestiVoix de Trois-Rivières

The Mauricie region's own summer music festival, FestiVoix showcases both established and emerging artists over the course of nine days in downtown Trois-Rivières on outdoor stages and indoors at various pubs and cafés.

Running June 24-July 3, this year's roster features Hedley, Les Cowboys Fringants, Coeur de Pirate, Busty and the Bass, Tire le Coyote, Foxtrott and Jean-Pierre Ferland.

www.festivoix.com

July

Abitibi-Témiscamingue humour festival

If you're in need of comedic relief or just looking for a chance to get away and share some laughs, check out Hydro-Québec's Festival d'humour de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue July 5-10.

This year's edition features an English show presented by Erica Sigurdson with the likes of Mathieu Cyr, André Sauvé, Katherine Levac and Rachid Badouri, among many others.

www.festivaldhumour.com

Tremblant Blues Festival

Mont-Tremblant is known for its golfing and family activities throughout the summer, but the resort also hosts the annual Tremblant International Blues Festival. With over 100 shows, most of them free, taking place on various indoor and outdoor stages, Tremblant's Blues Fest offers "10 days of blues, from its purest roots to its influence on R&B, soul, funk, country, folk and rock…" all in an intimate environment.

The 2016 edition goes July 8-17 and features Ian Siegal, Ben Racine, MicheLove and the Atomic Bullets, Nikki Hill, Mo Blues with a tribute to B.B. King, Kenny Wayne, Lance Anderson, Les Grandes Dames du Blues and many more.

www.tremblantblues.com

Drummondville Cultural celebration

Celebrating its 35th anniversary July 7-17, Le Mondial des Cultures de Drummondville brings together hundreds of dancers from around the globe for cultural celebrations and folk-dance performances.

Confirmed so far are dance groups from Costa Rica, Martinique, Taiwan, Belgium, France, Slovenia and Canada. This unique festival combines ancient dance traditions with modern staging, lighting and presentation. An international musical line-up will be announced in coming weeks.

www.mondialdescultures.com

Amos H2O Festival

Sprawled across five different locations along the Harricana River, Amos' H2O festival will float July 7-9 to celebrate nature's gift of water and the wildlife and aquatic activities it allows us to enjoy. Last year's events included a marathon, swim races, dragon boats and draws for $32,000 in cash and prizes.

With musical performances by Slingshot Brothers, Les Trois Accords, The Lost Fingers plus Renée Martel and friends confirmed for this year, the festival's sports and recreational activities will be unveiled shortly.

www.h2olefestival.com

Mont-Tremblant

Letters of hope and solidarity

Eeyou Istchee launches writing campaign to encourage youth of Attawapiskat

by Peter Wheeland

An Air Creebec flight scheduled to land in the northern Ontario community of Attawapiskat May 21 won't just be carrying the usual mix of passengers and freight. Organizers of a Cree letter-writing campaign are working hard to fill it with hope.

The initiative was launched April 14 in Waskaganish as Cree leaders, gathered there for a regional health conference, reacted to news of a wave of suicide attempts among local youth in the 2,000-member community on the opposite shore of James Bay.

"Our staff was very, very touched and they wanted to do something," explained Gaston Cooper, a spokesperson for the Cree-owned airline. "Everybody else in Quebec and Ontario and possibly all across Canada wanted to do something."

The idea for a letter campaign to express solidarity with their Ontario brothers and sisters was quickly taken up by representatives of the Cree Health Board, Cree School Board and Cree Nation Youth Council during a meeting in Waskaganish.

Mistissini health and social development director Ashley Iserhoff, who was selected to head the operation, said the purpose is "to show our solidarity as well as to show that people outside of their community care for them as well, to know their lives matter."

The May 21 flight won't just carry letters. The Cree Youth Council is currently raising funds to fill some of the 37 passenger seats with young Eenouch who want to show personal support for their western cousins.

Air Creebec is also volunteering its resources to fly in another 4,500 pounds of materials that have been donated to Attawapiskat youth, including books, games and sports equipment.

The original aim was to get the letters to Attawapiskat in late April. But Goose Break, as it traditionally does, put everything on the backburner as communities slowed to a crawl while thousands head out to the bush to hunt and reconnect to the land.

"Goose Break is a very busy time," Iserhoff acknowledged. He sees it as an important part of the healing process not just for Attawapiskat, but all Aboriginal communities.

"People are out on the land, which is nice. There is a lot of help and healing out there. It happens in all Aboriginal communities. When people go out to the bush, it changes perspectives and changes things."

A reconnection? Yes, he agrees, a very different one from the wi-fi connections of modern living, which can contribute to the alienation of Cree youth.

"Life has certainly changed within the Cree world in terms of technology that's available to us," he explained. "Everything is done instantaneously. Facebook, email, social media changes a lot of things. In the Cree world, things were a lot simpler than they are today. We encounter cyberbullying, text-message bullying… all that type of stuff that happens today."

Technology has no doubt played a role in increasing youth alienation in the north, as it has in the south. But it means that bullying of isolated Indigenous youths now "can come from anywhere. Not just from within our communities, but from anywhere in the world," Iserhoff observed.

A return to old-school forms of communication like a letter-writing campaign is something Iserhoff hopes will actually change lives. He mentioned a young woman he talked to "who went through various changes in her life." She received a note from someone else "reminding her of the purpose of her life, not to give up, not to lose sight of where they want to be, where they want to go in life."

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"That changed her perspective," Iserhoff revealed, "knowing that someone outside of her support [circle] does care. I hope that with the various cards and letters that will come in from Cree youth as well as Cree families throughout Eeyou Istchee, we will be able to reach out to the community of Attawapiskat. Perhaps this will be an opportunity to build bridges and establish good relations with our brothers and sisters no matter where they live."

The letter-writing campaign is a first step to healing. "My hope is things will change, that things can change." Iserhoff said. "Change comes from individuals and those individuals affect our communities and our schools, our nation, and it goes throughout the world."

"We have to speak life to one another all the time. I know the challenges of our people are great, but the hope that we have always searched for is already within us as individuals. If we continue to speak with each other, that spark of hope, that spark of energy that our communities need is already there."

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Walking the walk

Romeo Saganash forces the Liberal government's hand on UN Aboriginal rights standard

by Jesse Staniforth

The fight to get Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been a long one, one that NDP MP Romeo Saganash has been in since he was a representative of the Grand Council of the Crees. The Conservative government refused to embrace the Declaration after the UN adopted it in 2007.

Now, it would appear to be in accord with the stated intentions of the new Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who sent mandate letters to Minister of Indigenous Affairs Carolyn Bennett, and Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould, underlining that implementation of the UNDRIP is a top priority.

Yet, as Saganash points out, there's a difference between implementing the Declaration and adopting it. And in their choices of language, the Liberal government has signalled to Saganash less enthusiasm about the Declaration than they let on.

"I sense a reluctance already," he said. "So far, the prime minister has never used the word 'adopt.' He's always spoken about 'implementing the UN Declaration.' Those were his words when he spoke to the chiefs in assembly at the AFN in December. The mandate letters talk about 'moving forward urgently with implementing the principles of the UN Declaration.' That word that's so important, 'adopt,' is missing from the language they're using right now. You adopt legislatively, and you implement through programs and policies. That's the distinction the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) made, and it's quite an important one."

Trudeau has also indicated his intention to abide by all of the TRC's Calls to Action. To Saganash, his bill is simply a gentle nudge to the Trudeau government to get moving with what it has always said it intends to do. He tabled the same bill under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, whose majority Conservatives defeated it.

In practice, were Saganash's bill to become law, it would force all Canadian laws to respect the UN Declaration – something that could conceivably be very costly for the Canadian government. But Trudeau has placed himself in a position where it would be very difficult for him to back away from the UNDRIP.

There's a difference between implementing the Declaration and adopting it.

"Courts can use the Declaration however they want," Saganash observed. "That code has been reaffirmed in successive Supreme Court decisions, and quoted with approval. It does have application already in Canada. My private member's bill would just confirm that it is the state of law in this country."

Following the introduction of the bill in the House of Commons, Saganash asked in the next day's question period whether the Liberals would support it as they had when they were in opposition.

To this, Carolyn Bennett replied, "The government is absolutely determined to implement the United Nations Declaration. We have to work with First Nations, the Inuit and the Métis Nation to examine all of the implementation mechanisms available, including legislation. The bill was just introduced, and we are examining it."

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Make your own hand drum, hear the heartbeat of a people

THE BEAT OF TRADITION

Story and photos by Nigel Irwin

As Indigenous people, we are living in an exciting phase in our history. We are expressing ourselves through art, music and literature in ways never been seen before.

With this in mind, I recently decided to build my first hand drum. It began as a wooden hoop, some soaked hide and the will to make something special. The soaking process is the second most time-consuming aspect of drum making and takes more than a day.

To find the right hide is important. There are a couple ways to go about this. Some buy off traders and hunters who prepare hide for a living. Others choose a more ethical approach and use the salvageable remains of roadkill. We want to approach the hide with gentle respect knowing that the sound our drum will make is a conduit for the voices of our past to echo in the present.

To prepare the hide you must cut a circle about two inches wider in surface area than your wooden hoop. If your hide is soaked properly you could achieve this with scissors or a blade using a log surface or any flat

circular surface as reference. Then cut 12 pairs of small holes in an even distribution around the circumference of your hide.

Next, cut the hide into one long, thin strip, four times the size of your extended arms, fingertip to fingertip. It's important to stretch out the strip and test the toughness of the hide. Any snaps will give you trouble in the future; if your drum dries with a weak strip it will affect the sound quality.

Then we place the wooden hoop on top of the soaked hide circle and begin the looping process. This is the third most time-consuming aspect of drum making. Begin by finding a pair of holes and feed one end of your strip through the left hole from underneath the hide. Leave about nine inches of hide strip. This will become important later on.

Then we must loop the remaining entirety of the hide strip through the right hole of the pair, again beginning from underneath the hide and upwards. Once this is done, find the pair of holes directly across from the pair you just looped and do the same. Upon completion, continue the process with the pair of holes to the right of the pair you looped first. Continue on this way until all the pairs of holes are looped.

As you loop, make sure the strips are as tight as they can be. A tighter drum means a better sound and it will also give you more strip to work with. At one point your strip may snap but do not fret for we purposely cut ourselves an excess amount to make up for this problem! If you must, you can always tie two broken strips together and continue looping.

Once all holes are looped, you must tie your drum strings together using both ends of the remaining hide strip. Here's where some creativity will come into play. Just as each drum face is different so will each drum tie be different. The only goal is to make it as tight and as balanced as possible. Your hand will find a comfortable way to hold it.

Once you finish tying your drum then comes the most time-consuming process – leaving it to dry. You should ideally leave your drum leaning against an open window where it can be exposed to sunlight. This will take two or three days, which gives

you time to search for a drumstick, perhaps making one out of a carved branch. Lastly, when storing your drum remember to never leave it lying face down – it's disrespectful to the drum and to all the hard work you put into creating it!

When one feels called to make a hand drum it is a special moment. There is quite literally a rhythm that you hear deep inside you. It's the heartbeat of our people, gently guiding us and keeping our feet walking at a steady pace. It was first gifted to us by our women. In their infinite wisdom, they created something out of nothing so that we may meet with other tribes in peace. When each tribe brought their drums it meant that all were drumming in unison and when we sing and play in unison, fights and disagreements were less likely to arise.

That's a beautiful sentiment but what does it mean in 2016 when Native singers appear more like folk heroes than musicians? They carry the torch for all of us but drums are not meant for traditionalists only. They are here for all to discover. A hand drum is meant to be personal to those who carry them. Any song is the right song to sing.

It's the end of the world as we know it

So much of our society seems to be obsessed by the end of the world: Armageddon, the end of times, the grand finale. There are so many websites and blogs dedicated to this subject and most of them sadly are religious.

I am fed up with hearing about all the reasons and ways the world will end. Often, the people who promote this kind of insanity actually pick dates for our last days. Thankfully, these dates come and go without incident.

These prophecies have been made for centuries. Some people believe them and do all kinds of crazy things in fear of or in the hope they'll survive the apocalypse. But the earth continues spinning through space, the sun rises and sets, the moon visits us every night and the stars move by overhead as they always have.

The problem is that today we have the power to actually cause the end of the world. Many countries have nuclear missiles that if deployed could wipe out our beautiful and fragile planet many times over. There have been accidents and close calls over the past decades that could have meant our extinction on Earth.

Rather than evolving into a species that lives in peace we are still acting like a bunch of cavemen aggressively fighting over territory and the other tribe's resources. But we're not doing it with clubs, arrows or guns, but with very powerful missiles and bombs. Countries are playing chicken with each other in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. We Canadians are part of this insanity, which features the big players like the United States, Russia and China.

Rather than finding peaceful ways to solve conflicts and share the resources we have on this planet, we are attacking, killing and pillaging countries in much the same way we were hundreds of years ago. What the heck is wrong with us? Are we all that lost that we think this is a good way to manage our planet?

What is behind all of this aggression? It seems to me that the most powerful and greedy of our countries are promoting war to make money, feeding a huge industry dedicated to the sales of arms worldwide. Trillions of dollars are made in the sale of ships, submarines, aircraft, guns and bombs.

The really rich people starting these wars never go to fight in them. Their children and grandchildren never go to war.

However, they reap the benefits of capturing resources and making profits on supplying the war machine. So, if that is the case why don't we all stand up to this terrible reality and demand that this insanity of war stop? It probably has to do with the fact that the same people who start these wars also control most of the media and rarely question what the rich and powerful do. Our school systems do not question war and how unfairly wealth is shared in our world. We graduate thousands of university and college students who are mainly concerned with making lots of money, buying lots of stuff and living a "me" lifestyle.

Most of us don't even know how politics and power are organized. So, in all fairness to the average person, the chips are stacked against us. We are programmed very much these days not to be aware of why and how things are happening in our world.

The problem is that if we don't break out of this fog and become more aware, then those insane end-of-the-world promoters may at some point be right. The end of the world will not occur because of some divine reason. It will be because of greed and our refusal to wake up. We can change the way things are heading. We just have to work together and believe we can do it.

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